




# BOOK REVIEW




## 4 Chair Discipling: Growing a Movement of Disciple-Makers




by **Dann Spader**  
Moody Publishers, 2014

Dann Spader has trained thousands of leaders on the disciple-making strategy as modelled in the life of Jesus. His material has been used in small youth groups, large churches and on the mission field. (See [www.sonlife.com](http://www.sonlife.com), a ministry he founded). Rather than reading the Gospels mostly for the content of Jesus' words and ministry, Spader calls us to look deeply at the methods and model Jesus used to make disciples.




Spader uses "4 chairs" to illustrate the different stages of disciple-making. He uses Stanley N. Gundry's *Harmony of the Gospel* to bring into focus the pattern of Jesus' methods:

- Chair #1: "Come and see" (John 1:39)
- Chair #2: "Follow me" (John 1:43)
- Chair #3: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of people" (Matthew 4:19)
- Chair #4: "Go and bear much fruit" (John 15:16).




Jesus' method of making disciples included a deep commitment to a relational ministry. Jesus invested in a few, prayed often, loved sinners profoundly and balanced his life to win the lost, build believers and equip a few workers. Jesus came to show us how to make disciples, a reproducible process assumed in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) meant for every believer. When we discover the full humanity of Jesus, his method and model of disciple-making become doable for every Christian today.




This is not a how-to manual, but rather a readable theology and philosophy of making disciples. Most church leaders know how to "do ministry" (lead events, Bible studies, preach, etc.), but many are unsure about how it all fits together in a strategic, theologically sound, philosophically clear way.


Would it not be unusual to be given a command without instructions on how to fulfill it? Yet many of us fail to look at Christ's methods and his model in our ministries as the way to accomplish the Great Commission. Spader offers us the way forward, demonstrating how the early church lived this out (Acts 2:42–ff) and giving personal illustrations. He draws on other works like A.B. Bruce's *The Training of the Twelve*, Bill Hull's *Jesus Christ, Disciplemaker*, and Robert E. Coleman's *The Master Plan of Evangelism*.



Biblical theologians may critique of Spader's use of the *Harmony* on the grounds that parsing up Scriptures in a chronological way distracts from the intent of the biblical author. While that may be true, Spader's work pushes us into a different paradigm to observe process and methods without ever diminishing the integrity of good hermeneutics.



I highly recommend this book as the primary read for EQUIP 2017. If you understand what Jesus did, all other books and seminars will find their rightful place. Spader encourages the reader to first understand your theology and philosophy and then put it into practice in your unique context. I followed his advice and it completely changed how I did ministry! I have never regretted it!



—**Paul J Loewen** is Alberta conference minister, vice chair of the Board of Faith and Life and chair of the study conference planning committee.

